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Second report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1479 (2003) of 13 May 2003, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI), for an initial period of six months. The Council requested me to report every three months on the implementation of that resolution. The present report provides an assessment of the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement (S/2003/99, annex I) and describes the activities of MINUCI.

II. Implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement

2. After the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement in January 2003, the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire made progress, until early August. However, a series of developments led to the withdrawal of the Forces nouvelles from the Government of National Reconciliation on 23 September. As indicated in my previous report (S/2003/801), during the period from April to early August, the Government took some steps towards establishing the necessary foundation for the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. Those steps included the adoption of a plan for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration that was developed with the assistance of the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the opening of dialogue between the Forces armées nationales de Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the Forces nouvelles, which resulted in a declaration on 4 July proclaiming the end of the war; the reopening of road and rail links between the Government-held south and the northern provinces that are still under the control of the Forces nouvelles; the extension of the ceasefire line to the hitherto inaccessible western part of the country; the normalization of trade relations with the neighbouring countries Burkina Faso and Mali; the adoption of an amnesty law by the National Assembly; and the release of some 50 prisoners of war by the Government.

3. In addition, the Government presented a draft programme for implementing key aspects of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The programme envisaged the setting up of mechanisms to review legislation in respect of Ivorian nationality and eligibility for election to the Presidency of the Republic, and also the status of foreign nationals in Côte d'Ivoire. It also contained proposals for electoral reform,

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including the restructuring of the Independent Electoral Commission, the introduction of legislation to ensure credible voter identification, and a review of procedures for preparing the voters' register. The programme also recommended the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission, and an international commission to investigate human rights violations committed during the conflict. Furthermore, it proposed the adoption of legislation to ensure the freedom of the press and to strengthen media regulatory bodies. The Government was also expected to introduce draft legislation to enable the National Assembly to consider and adopt those proposals, as well as the timelines for their implementation.

4. The Government also established a National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, and announced a timeline for implementing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The timetable foresaw the cantonment of the various armed forces in July and August 2003, followed by their disarmament and demobilization from August to September and their reintegration during September and October 2003. FANCI and the Forces nouvelles agreed on specific cantonment sites for their respective troops.

5. In addition, the Government set up a Commission on National Reunification and made initial efforts, albeit with limited success, to re-establish State authority in the areas controlled by the Forces nouvelles. In some areas of western Côte d'Ivoire, where the French forces (Licorne), the forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMICI), the Forces nouvelles and FANCI have launched joint operations to remove uncontrolled armed elements from the weapons-free "zone of confidence" that was created in May, the efforts to restore local administration structures promise to yield results. Government Ministers recently conducted an assessment mission to those areas to prepare the ground for the reopening of schools and the deployment of local government officials.

6. The protracted and contentious impasse over the appointments of the Ministers of Defence and Internal Security appeared to have been resolved when, on 12 September, the President, Laurent Gbagbo, announced the appointment of René Amani, a retired civil servant, as Defence Minister and Bleou Martin, a human rights activist, as Internal Security Minister. The Forces nouvelles rejected the appointments, however. Although the two appointees were selected from a list that had been prepared in consultations among all parties, the Forces nouvelles, together with the party of Alassane Ouattara, the Rassemblement des républicains, contended that the procedures applied in making the appointments were not consistent with those set out in the Accra II Agreement. Nevertheless, the two Ministers were sworn into office on 13 September.

7. Citing the grievance reported above, the Forces nouvelles announced, on 23 September, that they were suspending their participation in the Government of National Reconciliation. They also withdrew from the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and the Commission on National Reunification. Apart from protesting against the appointments to the Defence and Internal Security portfolios, the other key reason cited by the Forces nouvelles for pulling out of the Government was that the President had not allowed the Government and the Prime Minister to exercise the full authority granted to them under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

8. The decision by the Forces nouvelles to withdraw from the Government came in the wake of a series of several negative developments, which aggravated tensions

in the country. On 7 August, the Forces nouvelles boycotted the independence anniversary celebrations hosted by President Gbagbo in Abidjan and organized their own ceremonies in Bouaké. President Gbagbo reacted by warning that, if need be, he would be prepared to use force to reunify the country. On 21 August, individuals suspected of plotting a coup against President Gbagbo were arrested in Paris and Abidjan. Those individuals were believed to be associated with the Forces nouvelles. Those arrested in Paris were later released, however. In a statement on the anniversary of the outbreak of the conflict, on 19 September, President Gbagbo described the prevailing situation in Côte d'Ivoire as a "false peace".

9. Without the participation of the eight Cabinet Ministers from the Forces nouvelles who are boycotting it, the Government of National Reconciliation is severely handicapped. Its work on crucial draft legislation that would enable the National Assembly to consider and ratify the programme for the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement has come to a standstill. Similarly, preparations for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, which were already behind schedule, have been halted. In the meantime, the stalemate is creating heightened tension, which could lead to a deterioration in the security situation. Where the Government was making efforts to forge national reconciliation, inflammatory messages have taken over. Rival rallies and demonstrations have become more frequent in Abidjan and Bouaké, resulting in increased political polarization. At such rallies held recently, supporters of President Gbagbo's Front populaire ivoirien called on the population in Abidjan to reject the presence of Government members from the Forces nouvelles in the capital city, while rival demonstrations organized in Bouaké declared that President Gbagbo should no longer be considered the leader of the whole country. Shortly after the Forces nouvelles announced their decision to suspend participation in the Government, FANCI blocked all the major roads linking the Government-controlled south and the Forces nouvelles-held north for a 24-hour period. In the meantime, FANCI have reiterated their warning that, should the Forces nouvelles refuse to heed appeals to return to the Government, it "may become necessary to take other measures to reunify the country".

10. Efforts to resolve the impasse are being intensified, both among the Ivorian parties and at the subregional level. The Monitoring Committee on the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement has been encouraging the parties to resolve their differences through renewed dialogue. On 26 September, six major political parties issued a memorandum, which identified the key issues that need to be urgently addressed in order to unblock the impasse. They included the activities of militias, the ineffective functioning of State institutions due to the "incomplete" delegation of authority to the Prime Minister, and administrative requirements under which disciplinary procedures involving civil servants had to be processed through the Ministry of Labour. With regard to the latter, the memorandum referred to a specific case, in which the President had reversed a decree that would have created a new management structure for Ivorian Radio and Television (RTI) and accorded the Minister of Communication, Guillaume Soro, who is also a leader of the Forces nouvelles, the authority to appoint and dismiss senior officials of the Ministry.

11. President Gbagbo has indicated his readiness to convene a forum of all Ivorian political forces to resolve the stalemate. At a meeting of the Council of Ministers chaired by the President, on 16 October, some decisions were taken aimed at addressing the concerns of the Forces nouvelles and the issues raised in the

memorandum of 26 September of the six political parties. Those decisions included the dissolution of the Groupement des patriotes pour la paix, a militia group well known for fomenting violence in Abidjan, a three-month ban on public demonstrations that were creating increased tensions, and changing the legal status of Ivorian Radio and Television to make it a parastatal agency, which would enable the Minister of Communication to have significant authority over the administration of the station. Furthermore, the President issued a decree extending the mandate of Prime Minister Seydou Diarra for a further six-month period. For his part, the Prime Minister sent his adviser on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration issues to Bouaké in an effort to convince the Forces nouvelles to resume participation in the preparations for disarmament. Despite these measures, the Forces nouvelles have remained outside the Government.

12. I remain in touch with the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and I have issued a statement calling upon the Forces nouvelles to return to the Government of National Reconciliation and urging all Ivorian political forces and their leaders to work together to build upon the steps already taken towards implementing the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. My Special Representative, Albert Tevoedjre, also continues to work with the leaders of the subregion to find ways to keep the peace process on track. On 19 October, he and the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, Raph Uwechue, met with the current Chairman of ECOWAS, the President of Ghana, John Kufuor, and discussed the idea of a high-level meeting that would bring together the major political actors in Côte d'Ivoire. President Kufuor subsequently conferred separately with President Gbagbo, Mr. Ouattara and Mr. Soro in Accra. President Gbagbo also visited Abuja on 20 October for consultations with the President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo. It is hoped that those consultations will result in the convening of the proposed meeting of the Ivorian parties in the near future.

III. Security situation

13. Although the ceasefire has continued to hold and there have been no clashes between FANCI and the Forces nouvelles, there is a serious danger of a possible degradation in the fragile security situation in Côte d'Ivoire if the current stalemate remains unresolved for too long. Already, in the northern provinces controlled by the Forces nouvelles, there has been a recent surge in violence by "uncontrolled" armed elements, and a general situation of lawlessness appears to be emerging. Unpaid soldiers of the Forces nouvelles survive by extracting money from the general population at checkpoints maintained throughout the north. There have also been recent reports of raids on villages by combatants in search of food and money.

14. A tragic manifestation of the worsening security situation in that part of the country was the bank robbery in Bouaké on 25 September, which degenerated into a bloodbath that left 23 people dead. The incident was subsequently followed by further related skirmishes in Bouaké among the soldiers of the Forces nouvelles, who were reportedly fighting over the spoils, and two other attempted bank robberies in Man and Korhogo, in October. In order to calm the situation in Bouaké, the leadership of the Forces nouvelles invited the French Licorne and ECOMICI forces to deploy there. On 24 October, Forces nouvelles soldiers at Bouaké Airport drove at high speed after a taxiing United Nations aircraft, forcing the aircraft to stop. One of the soldiers fired a round from his revolver on the tarmac near the

aircraft. The aircraft did not sustain any damage, and was allowed to take off after four hours of unjustified delays. In another very serious incident, on 25 October, soldiers of the Forces nouvelles detained and threatened to kill seven MINUCI military liaison officers who were on a reconnaissance mission in Man. Fortunately, the team was rescued by another group of Forces nouvelles soldiers who escorted them out of the town.

15. An uneasy calm prevails in the Government-controlled southern part of the country. FANCI controls the military situation in the area, together with the Gendarmerie, but the activities of militias in the south continue to be a cause for concern. In Abidjan, the security situation remains unpredictable. Recently, the premises of foreign-owned utility companies have been the target of attacks by militias who accuse them of providing telephone and electricity services to the Forces nouvelles-controlled areas. There is a widespread belief that demonstrations, which have resulted in attacks, are politically motivated, with tacit support from high-level political actors in the capital. On 23 October, an Ivorian police officer shot and killed the chief reporter of Radio France Internationale in Abidjan. This tragic incident has been strongly condemned by the Government and the international community.

16. In western Côte d'Ivoire, the creation of a weapons-free "zone of confidence" and the joint operations of the French Licorne, ECOMICI, FANCI and Forces nouvelles, have significantly reduced the activities of the mainly Liberian armed elements that had hitherto created a situation of lawlessness there. As a result, farming and other economic activities have resumed in the zone of confidence and the Government is preparing to restore public services in some areas. There have however been reports of a residual presence of armed Liberian elements in areas of the Taï reserve forest and south of Toulépleu. Uncontrolled Forces nouvelles combatants are also still harassing the population in some towns. On 25 August, some of those elements, presumably under the influence of alcohol and drugs, opened unprovoked fire on a French boat patrol in the Lake Kossou area. A firefight ensued, which resulted in the death of two French soldiers.

IV. Humanitarian and human rights situation

17. The humanitarian situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains equally worrisome. Hundreds of thousands of people in the Forces nouvelles-held north and in the Government-controlled west still have no access to basic health care and other public services, and tens of thousands of children face a second consecutive year without schools. While the deployment of French and ECOWAS troops has facilitated humanitarian access to the west, the overall volatile situation continues to hamper effective delivery of assistance.

18. Several thousand immigrant farmers and agricultural labourers from Burkina Faso and other West African countries have been expelled from villages in the west, particularly around the Government-controlled towns of Toulépleu and Zouan Hounien on the Liberian border, and Guiglo and Duékoué further east. The local populations there have accused Burkinabè and other immigrants of supporting the Forces nouvelles. More than 7,000 nationals of Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali have been voluntarily repatriated from Tabou, Guiglo and Duékoué by the International

Organization for Migration (IOM) over the past three months. IOM continues to monitor the situation, but no further repatriations are scheduled.

19. Assessments by humanitarian organizations operating in the west show continuing high rates of malnutrition in the area. Although farming activities have resumed, erratic and generally below average rainfall has exacerbated the current situation of food insecurity. In the north, cotton farmers are facing severe food shortages, as they were unable to sell their crop during the conflict. Humanitarian sources estimate that 45 per cent of agricultural workers were of Burkinabè origin and many have now left the area. To alleviate the situation, the World Food Programme (WFP), the non-governmental organization CARE and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have been distributing food, while the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has started distributing seeds and agricultural tools in Zouan Hounien, Bin Houyé and Guiglo.

20. The latest influx of Liberian refugees in July 2003 brought the Liberian refugee population of Côte d'Ivoire back to its pre-conflict level of over 70,000. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), WFP and non-governmental organizations are providing shelter, primary health care, food and non-food items to the refugees. UNHCR and the Government of National Reconciliation have also jointly launched a mass information campaign to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence between the Liberian refugees and the local population.

21. WFP is using feeding programmes in schools and institutions in northern, western and central areas to gain direct access to vulnerable children, to encourage regular school attendance and to encourage FANCI and the Forces nouvelles to demobilize child soldiers. UNICEF and non-governmental organizations are providing educational support to displaced and refugee children in towns in the north and west, and in Abidjan. Their efforts have enabled over 100,000 children to benefit from informal educational activities.

22. The United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners have been not able to fully meet the critical needs of the vulnerable populations, owing to the volatile security situation in the country and the limited resources available. Only 40 per cent of the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for 2003 has been met. A new appeal for 2004 will be launched in November 2003.

23. On the human rights front, both FANCI and the Forces nouvelles have made some progress in implementing international norms and standards relating to the protection of children associated with armed groups. There has been no reported new recruitment of child combatants on either side during the reporting period. Humanitarian organizations have however reported that the Forces nouvelles continue to use child soldiers at roadblocks and in other military activities. With encouragement from UNICEF, the Forces nouvelles recently issued a declaration announcing their commitment to cease the recruitment of children under 18 and to put an end to the employment of such children in military operations. The Forces nouvelles leaders have also issued a circular to all commanders instructing them to withdraw all child soldiers from their units and hand them over to UNICEF and other child protection agencies. As a result of these efforts, some 300 "pre-demobilized" child soldiers are undergoing rehabilitation at a transit centre in Bouaké, under the auspices of UNICEF.

24. MINUCI, UNDP and UNICEF have jointly provided technical assistance to the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration in devising strategies aimed at facilitating the demobilization and the reintegration of child soldiers, within the framework of the national programme.

25. Despite these positive developments, continuing serious violations of human rights by both FANCI and the Forces nouvelles have been reported. Both groups reportedly harass the civilian population, and house searches, roadblocks, arrests, torture and incommunicado detention of alleged "infiltrators" and sympathizers are widespread. The Government is still detaining 13 persons on account of the alleged coup attempt in August 2003. MINUCI human rights officers have been granted access to the detainees.

26. The situation concerning the freedom of the press in Côte d'Ivoire also continues to cause major concern. As indicated earlier, a Radio France Internationale reporter was killed by a policeman on 21 October. MINUCI condemned that act in the strongest terms and called upon the Government to not only guarantee the safety of all persons in the country but also to protect freedom of expression.

V. Economic situation

27. The economic growth that Côte d'Ivoire enjoyed in the earlier part of 2002 was completely reversed by the military and political crisis of September 2002 and the country witnessed a negative growth of -1.2 per cent for the whole of 2002. The Linas-Marcoussis Agreement had generated expectations of better economic performance for the current year. The slow pace of its implementation and the current political stalemate will in all likelihood translate into another year of economic contraction, however. The West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) is projecting another negative economic growth year for the country, at -2.7 per cent.

28. The slump in economic activity cuts across all sectors, with the noticeable exception of the cocoa and oil and gas subsectors. For the first six months of 2003, when compared to the same period in 2002, the production of cash crops fell by 43.4 per cent for coffee, 17.8 per cent for palm oil and 5.8 per cent for pineapples. For cotton, rubber and food crops, data are not readily available, but the continued displacement of more than half a million people and the delay and obstacles in the provision of agricultural inputs in the north are indications of a decline in the production of those commodities. On the other hand, cocoa production rose to 0.489 million tons from 0.456 million tons (an increase of 7.2 per cent) and oil production reached 0.437 million tons (a 51.6 per cent increase).

29. Industrial production fell by 17.8 per cent for the first six months of 2003, compared to the same period in 2002. The food industry, as well as the textile, shoe, building materials and construction industries are experiencing contraction ranging from 20 to 50 per cent. Several small and medium-sized enterprises remain closed or have reduced their activities and laid off several of their employees. Retail trade witnessed a 10.2 per cent reduction in the first six months of 2003. As a result of the disruptions caused in the transport sector by the de facto partitioning of the country, and the persisting negative impact of the crisis on the tourism industry, the tertiary sector is following the same downward trend.

30. The economic decline has affected the Government's capacity to generate revenues, which have plummeted to 606.6 billion CFA Francs for the first six months of the current year — a decrease of 8.3 per cent when compared to the same period of 2002. Despite the decline in its revenues, the Government has increased its recurrent expenditure, which reached 515.5 billion CFA Francs against 472.7 billion CFA in 2002 (an increase of 9.1 per cent), owing, among other things, to new recruitment in the security forces and to humanitarian and emergency operations. According to the latest estimates published by WAEMU (October 2003), inflation has reached 4.1 per cent over the past 12 months in Côte d'Ivoire against an average of 1.2 per cent for the whole region.

31. Despite the increase in the volume of cocoa production, the current lower prices combined with a reduction in the volume of other export products have resulted in exports valued at 1,699.2 billion CFA Francs for the first semester of 2003 against 1,757.7 billion CFA Francs for the same period in 2002. Because of the reduction in economic activity, the value of imports in the first semester of 2003 is estimated at 824.3 billion CFA Francs against 914.4 billion for the same period in 2002. Hence, for the period considered, external trade has been characterized by a reduction in both exports and imports and an overall trade balance of 874.9 billion CFA Francs in June 2003 against 843.3 billion in June 2002.

VI. Deployment and activities of Licorne, ECOMICI, FANCI and Forces nouvelles

32. The French forces (Licorne) are currently deployed in the eastern and central sectors of the country to backstop ECOMICI troops that are monitoring the ceasefire line. In the west, the Licorne forces maintain a heavy presence covering the areas from Danané to Zouan Hounien. The Licorne forces recently deployed in Bouaké, in the Forces nouvelles-controlled northern area, at the request of the Forces nouvelles, in the wake of the bank robbery referred to in paragraph 14 above.

33. ECOMICI troops, whose total strength is currently 1,383, are deployed along the ceasefire line, which runs across the country from east to west, to keep FANCI and the Forces nouvelles apart (see map). However, they continue to face severe troop and logistical shortfalls, which seriously hamper their operations. Furthermore, ECOMICI operations are plagued by a precarious financial situation, which has raised concern about the ability of ECOWAS to sustain its presence in Côte d'Ivoire. This is particularly disturbing given the increased risk of a further deterioration in the already fragile security situation resulting from the current political stalemate.

34. FANCI deployments remain more static, spreading from Bondoukou in the east to Toulépleu in the west. They conduct occasional patrols south of the zone of confidence, where their units are based in the former strongholds of the Mouvement populaire ivoirien du grand ouest (MPIGO), covering Bin Houyé, Toulépleu, Bloléquin, Guiglo and Taï. Elsewhere in the Government-controlled areas, they maintain checkpoints on highways and on the outskirts of towns. In Abidjan, FANCI maintain a heavy presence, particularly at night. The air force is currently training Ivorian pilots on Mi-24 helicopter gunships in Yamoussoukro, and it also conducts occasional flights using combat aircraft and a drone.

35. The military component of the Forces nouvelles remains a loosely knit outfit led by non-commissioned officers who operate in a semi-autonomous manner. In Man, Korhogo, Odienné, Bouna and Séguéla, the officers enjoy a particularly dangerous degree of autonomy, which appears to indicate the lack of an effective command, control and communications network within the forces. The Forces nouvelles man four checkpoints in the zone of confidence. MINUCI military liaison officers have established a good working relationship with Forces nouvelles leaders and personnel in the Bouaké area, as well as in Duékoué. However, negotiations for deploying a team of military liaison officers in Korhogo, in the far north, are making very slow progress, because of resistance by the local Forces nouvelles to the presence of foreign military personnel, including the Licorne and ECOMICI forces, in that town. In addition, the Forces nouvelles have not allowed the military liaison officers full freedom of movement, except in the Bouaké area; in Man and Bouna, they have allowed them only controlled access. Nevertheless, despite the recent incident in Man, a good rapport has been established with the local Forces nouvelles commanders and negotiations to deploy a MINUCI team of military liaison officers there are at an advanced stage. The newly established team in Bondoukou has established contacts with the local Forces nouvelles leaders in Bouna, who have requested MINUCI to facilitate an assessment mission to the town by humanitarian agencies.

VII. Status of deployment and activities of MINUCI

36. There are currently 34 United Nations military liaison officers deployed in Côte d'Ivoire (see annex). At the request of MINUCI, I have approved the deployment of the remaining 42 officers, pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 1479 (2003). Their induction, which will take place progressively in November and December 2003, will enable MINUCI to establish a presence in more Forces nouvelles-controlled areas and prepare for the role it is expected to play in supporting the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, as explained below.

37. Military liaison officer teams are stationed at the MINUCI headquarters and three sites in Abidjan (at the Licorne, ECOMICI and FANCI headquarters), as well as in Bondoukou in the east, Duékoué and Daloa in the west, and Yamoussoukro and Bouaké in central Côte d'Ivoire. Once ongoing negotiations with the Forces nouvelles are concluded, and if security conditions permit, two new team sites will be opened in Man in the west, Korhogo in the north, and San-Pédro in the south, as additional military liaison officers arrive in the Mission area. The tasks of the officers so far consist of conducting liaison with all the military forces on the ground, monitoring the security situation on a 24-hour basis, building confidence between FANCI and the Forces nouvelles, particularly through participation in the quadripartite meetings, assisting, within their capabilities, in investigating incidents of shooting and confrontations in the zone of confidence, and monitoring the security of Liberian refugees in the west and in Abidjan. In their contacts with the Forces nouvelles, the military liaison officers have been encouraging the group to remain engaged in the peace process.

38. With regard to planning for the future activities of its military component, MINUCI is focusing on the role of the military liaison officers in supporting the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. It

is expected that military liaison officers will perform certain key tasks, including monitoring the movement of the armed groups to the cantonment sites, monitoring the sites where heavy weapons and military aircraft will be confined, and supervising the registration of weapons and the destruction of those that are not serviceable. MINUCI will have a representative on each of the demobilization committees to be established across the country. The committees will be responsible for the registration of and the preparation of personal files on each demobilized combatant.

39. The activities of the civilian component of the Mission are focusing on monitoring the human rights situation and the media, as well as on preparations for the elections to be held in 2005, and on working within the framework of the Monitoring Committee to facilitate the peace process. The Mission's five human rights officers have continued to sensitize the Ivorian authorities on human rights issues. In consultation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), MINUCI is making arrangements for the joint visit of the Special Rapporteurs on freedom of expression and on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to Côte d'Ivoire in November 2003. In the meantime, the Mission's human rights unit is also planning to expand, within its capabilities, its operations throughout the country. Late in September, a MINUCI human rights office was opened in Duékoué. Other field presences are expected to be established in Bouaké, Yamoussoukro, Daloa, Bondoukou, San-Pédro and Man in the near future. OHCHR representatives visited MINUCI in September 2003 to assist the unit to define the scope of its operations. During that visit, broader areas of OHCHR support to MINUCI were also determined.

40. The MINUCI public information unit has maintained active dialogue with the Ivorian media in order to promote the dissemination of accurate, objective and relevant information on both the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the mandate of MINUCI. The unit is also implementing a communication and outreach campaign aimed at curbing the messages of hate carried by some of the Côte d'Ivoire press. The Mission has supported the efforts of the Government of National Reconciliation, including radio and television broadcasts and awareness programmes for grassroots communities, vulnerable groups and ex-combatants throughout Côte d'Ivoire.

41. Following the deployment of an electoral adviser to the Mission in August, MINUCI has started planning for the role it is expected to play in supporting the national elections of 2005. In August I received a letter from the Prime Minister requesting the United Nations to provide electoral assistance to Côte d'Ivoire. The visit of a United Nations electoral assessment mission to Côte d'Ivoire, which was planned for September 2003, had to be postponed, however, because of the current political stalemate and the prevailing security situation in the country. In the meantime, an assessment conducted by the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie, the former President of Senegal, Abdou Diouf, who led a mission to Côte d'Ivoire from 2 to 6 October, concluded that, without an early reunification of the country, the holding of elections in 2005 might prove to be impossible.

VIII. Regional aspects

42. The Government of National Reconciliation has continued efforts to normalize relations with neighbouring States, which had been disrupted by the conflict. On 10 September, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso announced the reopening of their borders, and President Gbagbo indicated that he intended to visit Burkina Faso in the near future.

43. As the security situation in Liberia gradually improves with the ongoing deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the resumption of humanitarian activities in that country, it is expected to have a salutary impact on Côte d'Ivoire. In particular, the return of Liberian refugees and the expected repatriation of Liberian armed elements will help to stabilize western Côte d'Ivoire. To avoid a spillover of tensions across the borders, however, close coordination will be necessary among the United Nations peacekeeping operations, together with the concerned United Nations agencies. The United Nations Office for West Africa recently convened a meeting with the participation of MINUCI, UNMIL, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) to discuss ways of tackling cross-cutting subregional challenges, including the use of child combatants, mercenaries and the circulation of small arms. In addition, on 14 November, UNAMSIL will host a meeting with MINUCI, UNMIL, UNOGBIS and the United Nations Office for West Africa to work out mechanisms for cooperation and support among the missions. UNMIL will also ensure that its brigade that will be deployed in the areas along the border with Côte d'Ivoire establishes liaison with Licorne, ECOMICI and MINUCI.

IX. Financial aspects

44. As indicated in my first report to the Security Council on MINUCI (S/2003/801), I have obtained from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions commitment authority in the amount of $14 million to meet the cost of the most essential and immediate start-up requirements of the Mission for the period from 13 May to 31 December 2003. My proposed budget for MINUCI for the period from 13 May 2003 to 30 June 2004 amounts to $29.9 million. I expect the General Assembly to take action on it during the main part of its fifty-eighth session. As at 30 September 2003, the total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations amounted to $1,559.5 million.

X. Observations

45. Since my last report (S/2003/801), issued on 8 August, the Ivorian peace process has encountered serious difficulties. President Gbagbo's appointment of the Defence and Internal Security Ministers in September was expected to complete the composition of the Government of National Reconciliation and thus remove a key obstacle to the peace process. The consultative process through which the appointments were made was generally viewed as consistent with the spirit of the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra II Agreements. Regrettably, the Forces nouvelles have

rejected the appointments and pulled out of the Government, leaving it effectively unable to implement the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

46. In order to keep the Ivorian peace process on track, the fundamental issues behind the current stalemate must be identified and urgently addressed. The differences among the Ivorian political actors over their interpretation of the power-sharing concept envisaged in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement are one of the key issues. The Forces nouvelles and six other signatory parties to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement have been insisting that the President has not delegated sufficient powers to the Prime Minister and to the Government of National Reconciliation, as envisaged under the Agreement. President Gbagbo and his party have however consistently rejected any interpretation of the Agreement that would be in conflict with the Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire, which, in article 41, invests executive powers exclusively in the President. Nonetheless, it should be noted that article 53 of the Constitution grants the President the authority to delegate the necessary executive powers to the members of the Government.

47. Another key issue is the failure of the Government of National Reconciliation to comply with paragraph 3 (f) of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, which required it to begin restructuring Côte d'Ivoire's defence and security forces immediately upon taking office. Unless this fundamental question is addressed, the Forces nouvelles will not feel assured of their security and they may therefore continue to hold on to the territory under their control and to evade the commencement of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Related to this are the differences in the interpretation of the provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement relating to the disarmament of FANCI and the Forces nouvelles. Pronouncements emanating from the ruling party since the signing of the Agreement have implied that FANCI will not be subjected to disarmament, contrary to the relevant provisions of the Agreement, which call for the disarmament of "all forces".

48. The situation is compounded by the activities of hardliners on both sides. The "militarists" within the Forces nouvelles are less inclined to compromise and appear to be determined to hold on to their weapons and the territory under their control until the crucial issues pertaining to nationality and article 35 of the Constitution, which stipulates criteria for eligibility to be elected President of the Republic, are resolved. Within the ruling party, there is a general feeling that the Government has made major concessions, which have not been reciprocated by the Forces nouvelles. Of particular concern to the ruling party is the fact that the Forces nouvelles still maintain a parallel administration in the north, despite being part of the national Government. This has led some key figures in the ruling party to question the sincerity of the Forces nouvelles' commitment to the peace process and to press for the rearming of FANCI, so as to keep the military option open.

49. While I welcome the steps President Gbagbo and the Government of National Reconciliation have taken so far, I am also concerned that, nine months after the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, some of its key provisions have yet to be implemented. Until they are, the peace process is likely to remain tenuous. I therefore urge the Ivorian leaders to cooperate with the ongoing efforts of President Kufuor and other ECOWAS leaders to convene a meeting between President Gbagbo and the signatories of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. Such a meeting must focus on reaching agreement on the fundamental issues and on a calendar for the accomplishment, within the coming few months, of the following key benchmarks: (a) the acceptance by all parties of the Government of National Reconciliation as

fully constituted after the appointment on 12 September of the Defence and Internal Security Ministers; (b) the immediate return of the Forces nouvelles to the Government; (c) the immediate commencement of the disbanding of all militias; (d) the earliest and simultaneous cantonment of both the Forces nouvelles and FANCI, and the commencement of their disarmament; (e) the immediate restoration of State authority throughout the territory of Côte d'Ivoire; and (f) the adoption by the National Assembly, before the end of 2003, of the Government's proposed programme for the implementation of provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement relating to nationality, article 35 of the Constitution, electoral reforms, the media and human rights. It should be recalled that the signatories of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement had pledged to support the Government when the Assembly took up those reforms.

50. I fully share the assessment of the recent mission of the International Organization of la Francophonie to Côte d'Ivoire that, without an early reunification of the country, the holding of elections in 2005 will not be possible. The implementation of the specific benchmarks identified in paragraph 49 above would facilitate the reunification of Côte d'Ivoire. Once the current stalemate is resolved, and the parties agree on timelines for those benchmarks and open up the country for free movement, the United Nations will be ready to dispatch an electoral assessment mission to Côte d'Ivoire to determine how best the Organization can support the elections of 2005, as requested by the Government.

51. The Security Council could contribute to the efforts to resolve the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire by supporting the proposals outlined above, and by taking further measures to strengthen MINUCI. I am pleased to note that consultations have already begun on the possible reinforcement of the Mission. I trust that Council members will be able to reach an early decision on this important matter. In the meantime, I recommend that the mandate of MINUCI be renewed for a further period of six months. Pending the decision of the Council concerning the reinforcement of MINUCI, I would like to appeal to the international community to provide the necessary logistical and financial support to ECOMICI, which is playing an indispensable role in stabilizing the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

52. With the recent deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Liberia, and the ongoing consolidation of peace in Sierra Leone before the final withdrawal of UNAMSIL, the international community finally has the unique opportunity to pursue an effective regional approach in its efforts to bring lasting stability to Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. I am confident that all stakeholders will make the best use of this opportunity, and be fully cognizant of the dangers of failing to address adequately any one of the situations in the three countries. For their part, MINUCI, UNMIL and UNAMSIL are already undertaking efforts to maximize the benefits of their simultaneous operations to address cross-cutting subregional issues in a coordinated manner, in close cooperation with the United Nations Office for West Africa.

53. In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to my Special Representative, Albert Tevoedjre, as well as to the civilian and military personnel of MINUCI for the contribution they are making to the efforts to restore lasting peace in Côte d'Ivoire. I also wish to commend the ECOMICI and Licorne forces, the United Nations agencies and the humanitarian agencies for the critical work they are performing on the ground. I am also grateful to President Kufuor of Ghana and all other ECOWAS leaders for the important role they have played in keeping the peace process on track.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire military liaison officers

Appointment	*Rank*	*Surname*	*First name*	*Country*	*Deployment*
CMLO	Brig. Gen.	Hafiz	Abdul	Bangladesh	MINUCI HQ
COS/DCMLO	Col.	Muller	Michael	Austria	MINUCI HQ
Plans officer	Col.	Partington	George	Ghana	MINUCI HQ
COO	Lt. Col.	Sing	Sandeep	India	MINUCI HQ
Asst. plans officer	Lt. Col.	Gurung	Dhiren	Nepal	MINUCI HQ
Military information officer	Lt. Col.	Colclough	Eamonn	Ireland	MINUCI HQ
Asst. MIO	Maj.	Sarr	Papa Souleyman	Senegal	MINUCI HQ
DDR adviser	Lt. Col.	Alzawahreh	Ibrahim Abdel Karim	Jordan	MINUCI HQ
Asst. DDR adviser	Capt.	Lupuleasa	Cristian Claudiu	Romania	MINUCI HQ
Logs plans officer	Lt. Col.	Ndiangui	Moses Ndungu	Kenya	MINUCI HQ
Watch officer 1	Maj.	Fitzsimmons	Brian	Ireland	MINUCI HQ
Watch officer 2	Maj.	Agbemadokponou	Edouard	Benin	MINUCI HQ
Watch officer 3	Maj.	Ovelar	Martinez Cesar Regino	Paraguay	MINUCI HQ
CMPO	Lt. Col.	Ahmed	Iftekar	Bangladesh	MINUCI HQ
MLO	Maj.	Gbaguidi	Fructueux	Benin	FANCI HQ Abidjan
MLO	Lt. Col.	Cebanu	Alexandru Gheorghe	Republic of Moldova	Bondoukou
MLO	Lcdr.	Souissi	Thameur	Tunisia	FFCI HQ Abidjan
MLO	Lt. Col.	Amos	Bulus	Nigeria	ECOWAS HQ Abidjan
MLO	Lt. Col.	Janas	Jerzy	Poland	Bouaké
MLO	Maj.	Briggs	Victor Tamuno	Nigeria	Bouaké
MLO	Lt. Col.	Naseem	Hassan	Pakistan	Bondoukou

Appointment	*Rank*	*Surname*	*First name*	*Country*	*Deployment*
MLO	Lt. (N)	Diaz Caceres	Carlos Adriano	Paraguay	Bouaké
MLO	Lt. Col.	Gueye	Maye	Senegal	Duékoué
MLO	Lt. Col.	Al Mawajdeh	Ali Irshad	Jordan	Duékoué
MLO	Lt. Col.	Rodriguez	Daniel	Uruguay	Yamoussoukro
MLO	Capt.	Mounkaila	Souleyman	Niger	Daloa
MLO	Lt. Col.	Terra	Robert Do Canto	Uruguay	FANCI HQ Abidjan
MLO	Maj.	Dmitry	Artyushchik	Russian Federation	Yamoussoukro
MLO	Maj.	Ciubotariu	Constantin	Romania	Duékoué
MLO	Maj.	Faye	Amar	Senegal	Bondoukou
MLO	Lt. Col.	Bouriga	Taoufik	Tunisia	Duékoué
MLO	Lt. Col.	Ahmed	Mohamed	Niger	Bouaké
MLO	Capt.	Leontin	Ilie	Romania	Yamoussoukro
MLO	Lt. Col.	Pena Weisensee	Ruben Dario	Paraguay	Daloa

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